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AMERICAN POLITICS.

"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend."—John, 19 : 12.

Miserable man! degraded people!—he that he could hear, they that they could urge so base an argument. Because he hesitates to give the order for crucifying a citizen guilty of no crime, they cry out against him as false to Cæsar. "Thou art not Cæsar's friend," they cry in their wrath, and they mean by this, as much as to say, "we will destroy you in the emperor's confidence, and have you removed from office." The pliant courtier and politician basely listens to their threat, and consents to gratify their malice!

Entering into the history of Christ's trial and crucifixion at this gate, or from this point of view, I propose to survey it as a scene of Jewish politics, and draw from it such admonitions as it will yield for our benefit.

The public mind is now so deeply absorbed in the politics of the country, that we can hardly get a hearing for the more spiritual truths of the Gospel. The people have no ears to hear aught besides the harangues of their great assemblies and the reports of their expressers. What then shall we do, since you turn away your ears so far from the great truths of God and eternity, but go after you, carrying these truths with us, and endeavor to surround you with them in the dusty strifes of your political arena.

Our country, at this moment, exhibits a new spectacle; one, too, in which we are called both to exult and tremble. When we see

such immense masses of men moving and combining against each other, all with so high a spirit and yet without violence or bloodshed, the whole nation sleeping as securely each night as if guarded by a standing army of bayonets; then when we consider that this tremendous array of numbers and masses is nothing but the constitutional working of a people to accomplish the high office of self-government, we have before us a spectacle in which every American may well exult. The fondest dreams of philosophy, in the old world, almost never gave out a vision of hope more splendid or sublime than the actual scene now exhibited by our country. What monarch of the old world would not turn pale at such a stir of the people as this? What established order would not be shaken by it, unless strengthened by arms? We are giving ourselves, too, in one view, a higher proof of permanence and of the security of our great principle of self-government than ever before since the foundations were laid. If we can stand the rocking of this sea and not have the joints of civil order loosened, it is high time to thank God for the peculiar glory and happiness he gives us, and promise, on our knees, never to despair of our country.

But there still is room, as I said, for trembling. It is impossible that such a profound commotion of the popular spirit as now heaves the bosom of the nation, should not, if continued, produce a great moral effect and strongly mark the public character. Any thing that takes deep hold of a people and penetrates their whole mass with emotion, will be an object of concern to minds well versed in the laws of society; and especially if the agitating cause is one of long continuance. When are we to expect, then, that this political agitation will be over? As our country spreads out in breadth, and becomes every year more populous; as the varied interests of society become more distinct and important; as the sweets of office are tasted by a greater and hungrier multitude, and the fact that every office is open to every man has suggested hope to as many as will have the effrontery to forward their claims; can we ever look for a period of cessation such as we have had in former years? Or must we always be on the edge of strife much as we are now? Is it, or not, the philosophy of our institutions, that we are to exist in a continual press of political agitation? As some governments have made a warlike, some a commercial, some an agricultural people, some a people of arts and letters, are we not constituted as a political people? Brewing on from age to age in our great caldron of popular elections, are we not, like the old Athenians, to become a people whose chief passion, and highest end, and strongest appetite, is politics? I confess it sometimes so appears to me. And if politics are thus to lead in the character of our people, and give the direction to our moral habits, I tremble, lest, in this way, we go down ere long into an abyss of irreligion and popular corruption, out of which we can never rise. We shall wear down, I fear, all the great principles and moral forces that have made us what we

are, and then die out, as a lamp whose oil is spent. Our cabals and factions, our unprincipled appeals, our mutual attacks upon character, our reckless determination to treat religion and every thing sacred in that way which will make it most augment the capital of our party, or diminish that of our antagonists—where, I am compelled to ask, will these combined causes carry us, if not downward into a prostration of all virtue? Of this one thing, at least, no thoughtful or reasonable man can doubt—our system of popular elections must have a fearful influence on the moral and religious destiny of our people. Politics cannot be a leading interest in the public mind, without making us such as our politics are. If artful, abounding in false views and false pretences—a people without truth. If too fierce and irresponsible to be restrained by laws and oaths of office—then a factious people, loose on the chances of perpetual revolution. If unjust to merit, jealous of virtue, and readily moved by a hatred of sacred institutions—a people without God or religion.

I do not say or believe that we are destined thus to sink as a nation. I only express a *fear*—a reasonable fear; which I do, not as despairing of the future, but as raising a guard against the very dangers in view. It is one thing to fear, another to despair. Fear is ever twin to hope, and the two sisters go hand in hand all their lives long. Hope whispers courage to her more timid sister, and she, in turn, whispers caution to hope; so that, between them both, we may neither faint nor miscarry. Repelling despair, therefore, at all points, let us also be willing to fear, and fearing, to apply those cautions and erect those safe-guards which are proper to our case.

It is with a view to lend what force I can in this direction, that I am now to speak. I claim no right to meddle, in this place, with any political question, whether in regard to men or measures; unless, perhaps, measures may be attempted which are against the fundamental principles of morality and virtue. That I have no preference of feeling between the two great parties which now divide the nation, I certainly do not pretend. I have as good right to such a preference as any other citizen, and shall exercise it as freely. But, as a minister of religion, it is my duty, and I claim also the ability, to speak of both or either of these great parties as the principles of truth and religion require. I am here no more a citizen, but an official advocate or teacher of the laws of God. And, in this character, it is my duty to search out what is morally corrupt or dangerous, and expose it wherever it may be found; to assert the laws of God, and do what I can to establish their sober influence over men—not every where, save just here in the domain of politics, but in every sphere and department of action into which they go. If, in the discharge of such a duty, what I ought to say infringes on one or both your parties, it shall give me no concern.

It is not I that say it, but the truth, and truth is impassible to whatsoever blame you may cast upon her.

But I was to review the closing scene of our Saviour's history. The political character of this scene may have escaped your notice, and you may ask me, perhaps, to specify what there is in this scene of a political nature?

Observe, then, that our Lord came professedly to establish a *kingdom*, and, surveying the history from this point, you will have a good clue to all that followed. His enemies understood by the kingdom spoken of, a temporal kingdom, and even his very disciples were slow to receive a better conception of his meaning. Great multitudes went after him, and he was exceedingly popular, for a time, with the lower classes of society, who seem to have taken up the indefinite hope of some splendid issue to be reached under his leadership. Many thought that he would break the Roman yoke and re-establish the Jewish independence. Others appeared to expect that he would change ends with society, not only releasing them from their burdens, but exalting them to eminence and official splendor in the state. And some, for aught I know, were expecting that the fields would yield their plenty without labor, and the sands of the rivers change to floods of gold ready coined. The most indefinite hopes are ever those which most captivate the multitude. The excitement ran so high, and such an immense concourse of people went after the Saviour, that the higher class of citizens, and those most connected with official rank, began to fear a revolution. The scribes, and priests, and publicans, or revenue collectors, the whole swarm of state and church officials were disturbed. They watched the Saviour, they caught up rumors concerning him. They even went out into Galilee to see what he was doing there, and whether some great mischief were not brewing in that quarter. And the Saviour, on more than one occasion, denounced against them, when present, the severest woes, on account of the oppressive burdens they laid upon the people. This more alarmed them. They began to speak of him as a dangerous man, turning the people's heads with his doctrine,—“Nay, but he deceiveth the people.” At length it was determined among the officials at Jerusalem that it would do to be quiet no longer. They had him arrested. This is said to be done by the chief priests and elders. But these, according to their system, were all political characters; for between ecclesiastical and political matters they had no distinction. Perhaps they were afraid, not merely of Christ, but also that Pilate, the Roman governor, would by-and-by side with the party of Christ, and take occasion, in that way, to demolish utterly the now tottering system of Moses; in which case all their official procedures, their tithes, taxes, and other immunities, would perish. It was therefore a great problem with

them how to enlist Pilate against Christ as soon as it could be done. And to this end they cunningly endeavored to work upon his fears, and at the same time upon those of Herod, who governed in Galilee, by representing that Christ and his army of followers were likely to raise a standard of revolt against the Roman supremacy. How well they succeeded we see in the fact that Pilate and Herod, who had been personal enemies before, were now brought into a coalition, and, for the time, made friends together, for the sake of crushing so dangerous a person. Christ, I have said, was arrested. But now the difficulty was to obtain a sentence against him; for the Roman government was a government of law, and Pilate could proceed against the Saviour only upon good evidence, and according to the strict forms of justice. A caucus, or something like it, was held in the night, to arrange a plan and prepare material for an accusation. They drew from the Saviour words which they affected to consider blasphemous. They caught up words, also, which he had used before, and perverted their meaning, giving them a false construction. They also hired false witnesses against him. In the meantime, or during the night, they contrived also to win over many of the multitude, or to overawe them by the violence of their proceedings. In the morning, too, before Pilate, they raised a fierce and savage outcry against Christ, which, it was well understood, would be contagious among the herd of the people. They shouted and echoed, and shouted again, "Crucify him, crucify him," till all began to think that one so hated must be an evil person, and joined in the common cry. Still Pilate had scruples, though ready to condemn, if he could; and what should now be done? To whip him in they raised a different cry, declaring in their rage that he was not Cæsar's friend. A mere politician's scruples are easily mastered. And how could Pilate be less ambitious to please Cæsar, from whom he had his office, than the multitude, who had and hoped for nothing from him. So they prevailed.

This brief review must suffice, I think, to convince you of the high political character of this great scene of sacred history. It was really a scene of Jewish politics, or it came as near, at least, to what we call politics, as the Jewish institutions would permit. It was a struggle of the popular will, a struggle on one side, at least, for precedence and office, as really as if it had been a contest at the polls on some annual election. On this most solemn and fearful, then, of all earthly scenes, we are to look for a lesson of public warning and correction. And I pray God, that as he has seen fit to connect the death of his Son with a scene of political frenzy, so we may draw from it (which doubtless he intended) those suggestions of principle and caution which may be needful to guide us safely in like cases. In this view, let me proceed to bring into more distinct notice some particulars in the history. And let not your minds be diverted from all proper

effort, by guessing at some unmeaning analogies or parallels which may be secretly intended. What I have to say I say openly, pointing the finger for myself, meaning just what I say and no more. Observe then,

1. We have it here in proof that a false and base appeal will sometimes go farther in politics than any other. I say not that it always will, for the noblest actions and the most generous motives to action are to be found, at times, in the fields of political history. I only advance a solemn caution, which no man should ever have out of mind, that the basest appeals may, and often do, have the greatest sway in such matters. What a scene is here exhibited, when Pilate, to save his office, or his standing with Cæsar, truckles to the malice of the multitude, and consents to the crucifixion of Jesus! Nothing else could persuade him—no evidence given, however plausible, no argument of law. But when he hears the taunt, "Thou art not Cæsar's friend," then he says, "Take ye him and crucify him." His strong sense of justice, clearly visible in his conduct, his sacred oath of office, is nothing to him longer. Ah, and have we no Pilates now—none that will violate their oaths and pervert the administration of their offices to show that they are Cæsar's friend? And, on the other side, among those who are so much in earnest to change the administration of the government, are there none who have an eye to the future Cæsar, and are hoping to repay their industry out of the new distribution of favors and offices? Your parties say this, I observe, each of the other. If what you say is altogether false, then must there be a cruel destitution of truth in your warfare. If true, then must there be much of greediness and profligacy in it. And this latter I so far believe, that if all the motives and aims of all your actors and agitators in this contest could be suddenly unmasked and set out bare to the sun, as they will be at the judgment-seat, the sky would blush over your land, and all true men of integrity and lovers of their country (who I trust are still the much greater number) would tremble lest these political strifes, by the base motives they engender, should finally debauch every remnant of virtue in the nation. Human nature has not changed since the days of Pilate; and therefore I would warn you of the dangers to which you are ever to be exposed in this field. You will ever be addressed here by the basest suggestions of selfishness. You may act from a pure love of country, which is a noble impulse; or from a love of principle, which is yet nobler; but you are also very likely to act from a much meaner impulse; for there is one ever lurking here at your side which has the insidiousness of a serpent, and will have you under the spell ere you know it, unless fortified against its approaches. The most mercenary and greedy of our politicians are never sensible of the utter degradation of their

principles. Actually sold unto sin, they yet go on, declaiming about the welfare of the country as earnestly and industriously as if they really had the purest and loftiest aims; so little do they understand their own character. Nor is it merely the candidates or expectants that are liable to be governed here by false or perverse motives. The multitude, who cried "crucify him," were as low in their motives as Pilate, or the priests and elders. Human nature is tinder to all sorts of unholy fire. And is there no danger lest wicked motives and base appeals may often prevail with the general multitude on such occasions? Will hatred of merit and character never have a determining influence with them? Will the envy of wealth and station never operate? Will opposition to religion and good men never operate? And if such motives are brought into play at every annual election, and fused into the public spirit, when it is all in a red glow, how rapid and rank must be the corruption wrought! Every strong exercise of what is bad gives it vigor. If the men who cried "crucify" against the Saviour, and crucified him, had met every year to do the like, for thirty years, what a crew of monsters must they have become! I know that good principle is sometimes brought into action in our elections as well as bad; but who that remembers how the base preponderates in our nature, and how apt the multitude are to yield to the baser passions, and how strong these passions must become at every annual or stated period of exercise, can do otherwise than tremble at the possible extinction, at length, of all goodness and virtue among us! And the more so, when it is so evident that many of our politicians spare no means of carrying their vote, however mercenary, or low, or wicked.

2. We are admonished that victory, in politics, is no *sure* test of the right. It was a victory of this kind that crucified the Saviour of the world. The voices that cried "Crucify him, crucify him," prevailed. And if we pass by the cross, we hear the victorious party there shouting in mockery and wagging their heads at the righteous victim of their malice. You have now two great parties in the field, and one or the other is to be victorious. Doubtless that party will be filled with high exultation. They will declare it by their flags flaunting on the air, and their cannon thundering down the valleys. But will it be the victory of merit and right, or the victory of art, and mischief, and corruption? It may be one, or it may be the other; for, as I just now showed you, the basest appeals will sometimes go as far in politics as any other. You must always go beyond the mere *fact* of victory, therefore, to find whether you will have any real ground of exultation. And when we go up to stand before God and answer, not by party declamation, but by the test of real merit, you will find it so. Many a victory then will show itself

to be a victory of wrong over right. See to it, then, every man, that the victory he is after is a victory of truth and justice; for it must be evident to every man, that if our nation is ever undone, it must be by such victories at our elections as are not victories of truth and principle. Prefer always to be vanquished rather than to win by falsehood, or stratagem, or bargain. Say not, as I sometimes hear, we must conquer the devil with his own weapons; for that is only to create a stouter and worse devil than the old, and curse your country with two instead of one. It is casting out devils by Beelzebub. No, if you cannot make right measures victorious, do not rob your country of all right men. An upright minority is better than universal corruption, and a good cause had better be lost than basely gained. The lust of victory is a dangerous passion. It will prove to you, alas, too easily, that your cause is a right one; nay, that the salvation of your country is in it. Be jealous, therefore, of yourselves, and see that you are not betrayed into the folly of a hard and toilsome struggle for that which is only a real mischief and shame to your country. I say not this to check your ardor, or keep you back from strenuous exertion. It is no merit to be a tame or timorous actor in this field. Only see, as you will do it when you stand before the judgment seat, that you act from a sober, well-ascertained view of the public good.

3. The hollowness of political friendships and alliances is here made evident. What are they, as we too often see them, but mere coalitions of selfishness and ambition; a Herod and a Pilate made friends together. Before, they were enemies; to-day they are friends, (if we may so desecrate the word,) because their interest compels them; to-morrow we may expect they will be enemies again, the more hostile and spiteful because they are parted by treachery. Just so it has been, too often, in the history of courtiers and politicians, from Adam downward. No where else can you find such a record of treacheries and violated friendships. True friendships, warmly returned and permanent as life, are seldom found here. The friendships we find are mostly mere coalitions, and the mental habits formed are those of jealousy, inconstancy, and utter heartlessness. Nor is it merely a few leaders that we see so often manœuvring to form new alliances, and try their fortune in new fields every few years; but the mass of the people, in their circles and neighborhoods, are ever undergoing a like round of chimerical change and re-assortment. If I mistake not, the effect of this process is quite evident in the American character, and is becoming more so daily. We have less warmth of friendship, and fewer of those old brightening attachments that part only as death severs them, than are to be found in other nations. I am willing to think that the fact of which I speak is due, in part, to our youth as a

people; that is, to our want of leisure and our unsettled migratory character. But it cannot be concealed, that our constant state of political warfare, our new coalitions, begetting a habit of universal distrust; and our mutual abuses of character, have all the same tendency, a tendency which every wise man and true lover of his country will deeply lament. And religion has a greater interest in the case than might be readily supposed. For there is a close and honorable dependence between habits of friendship and habits of piety. They both demand a warm and a large heart, and having this in the breast of a people, they are almost sure to dwell there together, sanctifying the pleasures and employments of life by a common influence. Never was a heartless people known to be a religious people. Let every christian give this fact due weight. Let every man, too, who is plunging into this sea of politics, inquire how far he will go? whether he is willing to give up all heart, and love, and social truth, to win success as a courtier of the people?

4. We are admonished that religious men may easily mistake the nature of their zeal in politics. The Scribes and Pharisees were men eminently religious, if we speak of their professions and their outward life. They made long prayers, they were exact in every form and ceremony of Moses. They held every tradition of the church as the apple of their eye. And yet, to our view, they acted more like devils in their zeal than like men. But not in their own view, for they did not know the spirit they were of. They were carried away by their political zeal to such a degree, that they even felt as if the most sacred interests of religion rested on their success. In fact they proceeded against the Saviour mainly on religious prettexts, though actuated, unwittingly, by no other object than to serve their party and their power. Christ, they said, had uttered profane threats against the holy temple, and the high priest actually rent his clothes, so horrified were his reverend ears by the Saviour's blasphemy. They spoke of law too. We have a law by which he ought to die. Fine prettexts these,—law and religion! Better, surely, could not be formed. Ah, and how many christians, so called, in these days, know as little the spirit they are of when kindled in our political strifes! The country, they will say, is in danger; the holy ark of religion is in danger. *Perhaps it is so*—and perhaps the danger we are in is as great as they suppose. But if so, they give us the best of all proofs that they have too often no intelligent perception of the fact, by their desertion of all the proper duties of their profession. When should a true christian pray, if not when the country is in danger? when will he gather himself to the church in her pious councils and convocations, if not when the ark of religion is in danger? But no, they are not here. And for this they have the best of all reasons, they fancy,

viz. that they have to fight for the very existence of religion in the great campaign of politics ! How can they pray, how meet with the church, how instruct their families, when they have to attend so many caucuses for the faith, and cry their hosannas in so many long processions of the people ? Understand me ; I make no objection to the long processions, nor even to your being in them. I only say, that when christians are so hurried away in the rush of the multitude, as to desert their most sacred duties, they do not know the spirit they are of. They declare, by that fact, that they have lost the balance of their christian intelligence. They are not only actuated by the worldly spirit in one of its rankest forms, but they are addled by it. I have no longer any confidence, in such a case, that they are governed by sober perceptions of truth or duty. Or if they may have begun with some real principles worth contending for, I perceive, by their extravagance and the loss of their self-possession, that they are already whipped in and tamed to tread where the party lions lead them. While the christian holds to his true place and his duties, there is somewhat of independence in him ; he at least acts from consideration. How great, then, is the dishonor and the loss when religious men lose this holy individuality and become mere parts or particles in a public whirlwind ! When I see how many such fall into all the rabid measures and styles that belong to party discipline, their perfect incapacity to understand how any thing can be done by their opposers without some corrupt intention ; their intolerant proscriptive spirit towards every man that will not be an unqualified partizan with them ; their hatred of every press that prefers to abide by truth, and will only give them a partial sanction ; I am filled with sadness that christian men should melt so passively into the moulds of worldly infatuation. Nay, I seem to see the old Scribes and Pharisees over again, and hear their frenzied cry. And it forms no unnatural background to the picture, that every Nicodemus among the people, who has a private scruple, or will minister to his persecuted Lord, is constrained to do it slyly and with a timorous heart.

Again, we are led to inquire what part is proper to the women of our land in these political strifes. It is worth noticing, that of the two women most conspicuous in the history of our Lord's trial-scene, Pilate's wife, who staid at home, gave him some good advice, which it had been well for him to follow ; while the busy maid, who went, actually faced down an apostle, and made him lie and swear as vilely as the worst man could. Some, I know, are pleased to unite the ladies in their political demonstrations, because their presence greatly conduces to preserve order and decorum. And doubtless it does in its first effects. It is an honorable distinction of our country, that we pay so delicate a respect to the fe-

male sex, and that our roughest men, our roughest assemblages, are seen to be softened and dignified by their presence. But I am greatly jealous still of the future effects that will follow, if the practice alluded to is continued. It will not take many years of rough publicity, in these ways, to make our ladies mere women to us, and abolish the delicate respect we yield them. They will no longer grace the fireside by their retiring softness, whispering in the ears of their husbands their pious cautions, or nice religious scruples, or, if you please, their ominous dreams, as the lady of the ill-starred Pilate did on the morning of his fall, but they will become our maids and runners, heard in the noise of our assemblies, handled, as chance may be or malice direct, in the public papers, mere female men, and one with us in all but the ability to be more than second or third-rate actors in our rough contests. I should be silent on this subject, were it not for the revolution which is beginning to appear in the manners of the female sex in a certain section of our country. I am anxious that such a revolution should have no general countenance any where. Perhaps I am unreasonably anxious, but if that revolution goes on as it has begun, it will certainly destroy some of the most precious and best influences we have left. Do save us one half of society free of the broils, and bruises, and arts of demagoguery! Let us have a place of quiet, and some quiet minds which the din of our public war never embroils. Let a little of the sweetness, and purity, and, if we can have it, of the simple religion of life remain. God made the woman to be a help for man, not to be wrestler with him. This he declared in the grand sacrament of creation, and we have a greater interest in the arrangement, as religious beings, than many ever stay to consider. Here it is that feeling is kept alive in us, and our affections saved from utter extinction. United here by truth and love, the truth of heaven and the love of God find a place also to enter our hearts. Or if this be too much, our nature is at least prepared, in a degree, to understand and open itself to the blessed approaches of religion. But if to all our present powers of strife and faction we are to add a race of factious women, there will not be left enough of feeling and rest to make life tolerable or allow virtue to breathe.

Again, the scene of Christ's trial and crucifixion shows us what to think of the sacredness of democracy. It has been given out, within the past year, with a profound philosophical bow to the people, and especially to christian people, that "democracy is holy." It is not enough that irreligion, or the hatred of religion, should be addressed and won by appeals to the vilest prejudices, but a sop also must be thrown to religion that she also may be gained. Now I have no objection to any such praises of democracy as our countrymen may choose, if they do not trespass on the sacred distinctions of truth and holiness. That the religion of Christ is a popular religion

I most certainly believe ; neither is any one better suited with the popular character of our institutions. But when it is given out that democracy is holy, the insult offered to religion is too offensive to be suffered. What do we see ? But yesterday the populace were all for Christ and followed him with their hosannas. To-day they are with the Scribes and Pharisees crying "Crucify him, crucify him." And the cries of them and of the chief priests prevailed. Yes, they prevailed ; they were a high majority. Democracy holy ! What was it when its multitudinous voice clamored for the blood of the Saviour of the world. Here was Pilate on one side, the organ of an imperial throne ; here were the populace on the other, all staining their hands together in this blood, and declaring to the world by that sign, that man is fallen and unholy every where ; that kings and thrones are unholy, that democracies are unholy, that all are cruel, and treacherous, and violent, and unfit to be trusted. And this is what we, as the ministers of religion, are obliged to declare. We are obliged to say that sin reigns in man universally, making him both a slave and a tyrant in his nature. That you can trust him with no interest, no form of government, and have it safe. No checks can tame him, no balances keep him in the sacred bounds of order. He will abuse power, pervert justice, betray trusts, and perpetrate all mischiefs, because he is a sinner. The many may be as bad as the few or the one, as bad a tyrant, as faithless a guardian of the public welfare. Under any and all forms of government you will have unholy work ; for man is unholy, your king is unholy, your democracy is unholy, full of mischiefs, treacheries, cruelties, and lies. This is the doctrine of the Gospel, and, what is, if possible, less to be doubted, the doctrine of our eyes.

But it is only meant, you may suspect, that the *doctrine* of democracy as *the true form* of government is holy, i. e. sanctioned by Christ. But before we are deluded thus, we had better ask, where and when it was done by him ? When did he condescend to tell us that ours is the true form of government ? When lend himself to any such mischievous flattery as this ? When did he undertake to be a lecturer for democracy ? And when his apostle dared to say of *all* the forms of government, "the powers that be, are ordained of God," did he there controvert his Master's special predilection for democracy as the only holy form ?

The sentiment of which I speak, on this head, is yet a strange sound, I rejoice to believe, to all but a few of our people. But being uttered under the imposing garb of philosophy, we can by no means judge, as yet, how far it will go. It may yet produce a new style of jacobinism in our country, viz. Gospel jacobinism ; a fanatical storm in which all the elements of religion and politics shall be blended, and their distinction lost.

Again, we are admonished in our history, of the depravity of the doctrine which proposes to give the spoils of victory to the victors. Let me take you to the scene where your Lord is crucified, and, after the work is done, I will point you then to four men, not the most worthy, sitting down to parcel out the garments of the crucified Saviour, and casting their lots for the seamless robe he wore. These, too, were receivers of the spoils. Now this doctrine which proposes to give the spoils to the victors, has been imputed mostly to one of our political parties, and, as some suppose, has been avowed by that party. Of this I am willing to doubt. However this may be, I will on no account be deterred from speaking of it as it deserves. I do it not as a politician, but as a minister of God and virtue, and in this character I am bound to speak of any thing, any where, that is corrupt or demoralizing. We shall see, perhaps, how far the opposing party will abjure this doctrine of the spoils, and whether it is not yet to be the universal doctrine of politics in the land. If so, then shall we have a scene in this land never before exhibited on earth; one which would destroy the integrity and sink the morality of a nation of angels. It will be as if so many offices, worth so much, together with the seamless robe of our glorious constitution, were held up to be the price of victory, and as if it were said, "Look, ye people, here is a premium offered to every discontent you can raise, every combination or faction you can mention, every lie you can invent. Cupidity here is every man's right—try for what you can, and as much as you can get you shall have." Let no one say that I here enter the field of politics myself. I speak here as a defender of moral principle, which is my duty. If there be any party in the State, or is to be, that holds out or avows this rule, it is a party which pollutes the public morals. Our Saviour taught us to be more than just to the government, more than quiet citizens. He said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." But this says, "throw down Cæsar if you can, and his place is yours!" Only conceive such a lure held out to this great people, and all the little offices of the government thus set up for the price of the victory, without regard to merit, or any thing but party services, and you have a spectacle of baseness and rapacity such as was never seen before. No preaching of the Gospel in our land, no parental discipline, no schools, not all the machinery of virtue together, can long be a match for the corrupting power of our political strifes actuated by such a law as this. It would make us a nation of apostates at the foot of Sinai.

Again, it will serve to impart seriousness and sobriety in these contests, if we notice in our history, that every man is individually responsible for what he does. Too many think that they escape all responsibility, because they act in such a great party

of men, or in such a vast array of numbers. "What am I among so many? True, the thing was wrong in itself, but we could not save the party without it. I only acted as I was compelled to act in the circumstances, and the blame must rest upon my friends, not upon me." Ah, and what a scene have we here! See this Roman governor. He had protested again and again, saying, "I find no cause of death in this man." But they would not hear him; and they begin to tell him in their rage that he is not Cæsar's friend. Now he assents; and see the solemn farce that follows! Secretly disturbed, perhaps, by the admonition his wife gave him, he calls for water, takes it, and washing his hands before the people, says—"I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." Ah, let him wash again! Rivers of water cannot wash out the blood that stains his guilty hands! Pilate is responsible for what he has done, and when he meets the Lord Jesus at his bar, he must meet him as a perjured judge and a crucifier. It will not suffice to say that he only went with the multitude: he ought to have withstood them. So is every one of you responsible to God for what you do, however pushed by numbers. You cannot wash your hands by throwing your guilt upon others. And for every wrong or corrupt act you favor, you must go into judgment side by side with Pilate, when tried as a cruel magistrate and a crucifier of the Lord.

Again, we ought to be admonished of the fact, that men do often seal their undoing in the strifes of politics. The trial and crucifixion of Christ, I have shown you, is in one view a scene of Jewish politics. Then, doubtless, the unhappy Pilate sealed the fate of his immortality. The same was true, probably, of many others; and they have gone to their account as the crucifiers of Jesus with the blood upon their heads. To all these that was a fatal hour. Think it not incredible that many, in the great election of our country now at hand, may do the same. What terrible passions are here brought into play! What desperate means and expedients will be suggested! How many will be tempted to give or receive a bribe! How many will violate their oath of office, or their elector's oath! How many will do a fatal violence to their conscience! Yes, my hearers, in this single campaign many of your countrymen will probably seal their eternal ruin; and it becomes you all to go into it with this truth full before you. I by no means counsel you to stay away and take no part in the election. You escape no responsibility by so doing. You have a duty here which must be performed. When the disciples forsook their Master and fled, it was no credit to them; it was only forsaking virtue and truth, and leaving them in the hands of their enemies.

Again, it must be remembered, in our subject, that the fate of a country is often at stake on the issue of a single turn of politics. From the moment when the Scribes and Pharisees prevailed, the doom of their country and temple was sealed. The sceptre now departed from Judah and went over to the Gentiles. Shortly after, in the siege of Titus, Jerusalem became, within, such a scene of starvation, faction, and murder, that it seemed as if some wonderful curse had changed the nature of men to that of fiends and monsters. So was the glory of the temple and the covenants blotted out for ever by the visible hand of the Almighty. Deem it not impossible that we may decide, even in a single election, the fate of our nation for ever. Would that our political leaders had a greater sense of their responsibility in this respect. They do not consider, I fear, the vastness of the interests they hold in jeopardy,—not impossibly our name and constitution, the happiness they have given this great people, and the glorious history by which their memory is sanctified.

Once more, if our institutions are to fall in this or any other future crisis, it ought to be a source of comfort that the government of God will stand, and that he will permit such an event only as he can overrule it to the furtherance of his glorious plans. What a fall was it when the Son of God was crucified! There virtue fell! There the prince of Israel! There the divine person of the Son! The wreck came close to the throne and fell against it! But that fall was the life of the world, our hope, our light, and the spring of eternal joy to myriads of redeemed spirits. If, then, our great nation, and our free institutions, which are now a star of hope to many gazing eyes, should be overwhelmed, which I trust in God and really believe they never will, be assured that God will suffer it only for the furtherance of his good designs. The event will come, only to be overruled and blessed to mankind. How cheerful and composing a thought, that when all the bulwarks of human law and order are tremulous, there is a government above which no agitation or tumult ever reaches; one whose laws are equity, whose councils are those of eternal wisdom and love. In this grand monarchy, or, if you please, republic of the skies, (for such in a sense it is,) all events are peacefully turned and moulded to their place; everlasting order reigns unshaken. I should think, my friends, that some of you who are weary and war-worn in this dusty field of politics, would be often looking away thither, and sighing for a rest in its arms!

I have thus taken you, my hearers, over a somewhat promiscuous field, but I hope not without benefit. My aim has been to impress you with the seriousness of your responsibilities in this direction. I have endeavored to go after you into this great field, and carry with me truths which you ought to remember. I hope you are at least impressed with a sense of the very intimate relation between

politics and morals in our country. How easily are the passions of our people enlisted here, and how deeply. These great gatherings, these fervid appeals, stir the strongest feelings in their bosoms. Are they virtuously stirred? I believe they often are. But I see so many appeals that are base in the lowest degree, and witness the assault of so many things that are sacred, that I cannot restrain my anxiety. And the more so because the strongest force is here at work upon our moral character that can be produced. What, then, is to be the result of these political agitations on the moral tone of our country? We are going rapidly in some direction, and it is time for every true American to ask **WHITHER?**

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